

Mr Chairman, Ranking Member Reed and Distinguished Members of the Committee, May 04, 2020

July 8th 1980, was a typical hot humid day aboard the US Naval Academy in Annapolis. I stood with just over 1000 of my Classmates to take the sacred oath of office that began like many of You, a career of service to Our Nation...For 30 years in the uniform of the Navy including sailing into Harms Way, later as a councilman in my town, then as a Senate Staffer to the late Arlen Specter and most recently as a US Ambassador. I've dedicated my life to the motto of Our Navy; "Honor, Courage and Commitment. Those are not merely words to me, those are the Guidestars by which I have always striven to sail True North.

Fourteen years later, on June 6th of 1994, I stood on the beach with my father at Normandy on the 50th Anniversary of the landings at DDay. He had been a young Private in the first wave, the third landing craft to touch the sand that morning in 1944. He told me about the sacrifices of those who were with him. He later would be severely wounded himself, shot in the head in his service to Our Nation. His self abnegation only served to reinforce in my heart, my head and my soul: Honor, Courage, Commitment.

Finally last summer on the 75th Anniversary of that same landing at DDay, I was once again able to stand on that sacred beach but this time without my father, instead the link to my 12 year old son Harrison who never met his Grandfather. Only a few of those who were there that

morning with my Dad were left. But Harrison and I endeavored to shake each of their hands recalling their sacrifices so we could be there...The same who like my Dad went before me guided by "Honor, Courage, Commitment" three simple but powerfully important words that have always guided all my actions.

I am humbled to appear before you to be considered to serve again this time as the 77th Secretary of the Navy. To uphold the sacred honor of those who have gone before me, whether Dorrie Miller at Pearl Harbor or Jason Dunham in Iraq. I thank President Trump and Secretary Esper for their trust in me.

As a child of the midwest I was taught to be frank: diplomatic of course as is required of an Admiral and Ambassador but direct. It saddens me to say: the Department of the Navy is in troubled waters due to many factors, primarily the failings of leadership. Whether Glen Marine Defense, ship collisions, judicial missteps or the crisis on USS ROOSEVELT, they are all indicative of a breakdown in the trust of those leading the service.

Sadly, I have witnessed crisis in the Navy before. In 1989 I was aboard the aircraft carrier USS AMERICA sailing with the battleship IOWA when an explosion killed 47 sailors, That was followed by the TailHook scandal. These were some dark days for the Department. However they taught me two things:

One the Department is resilient!

Two, it all starts with CULTURE!

I have learned this repeatedly in my career....Successful organizations have a strong culture which starts with leadership! And as I witnessed following the aforementioned events of the early 90's, a proud heritage of service and pride which the Department emphasized then for inspiration and affirmation and will again.

While I recognize the challenges for all they are, I am ready. I have learned across myriad roles: military service, private sector, Congressional Staffer, diplomat; I have been preparing my entire life for this moment; Always guided by Honor, Courage, Commitment.

I have many people to thank, like my mentor Admiral Tom Lynch.

And of course I wouldn't be here if not for my mother Sylvia who taught me that to work hard you can accomplish anything in America. Finally and most especially the continued love and support of my dear wife Melissa who has sacrificed so much for me and for Our Nation. God Blessed me by bringing each of them into my life!

Thank you Mr Chairman and members of the Committee for this opportunity to come before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.